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General

These photographs, arranged in alphabetical order, are from the collection of The New York Historical Society

The Bath 1894 *(not in exhibition)*

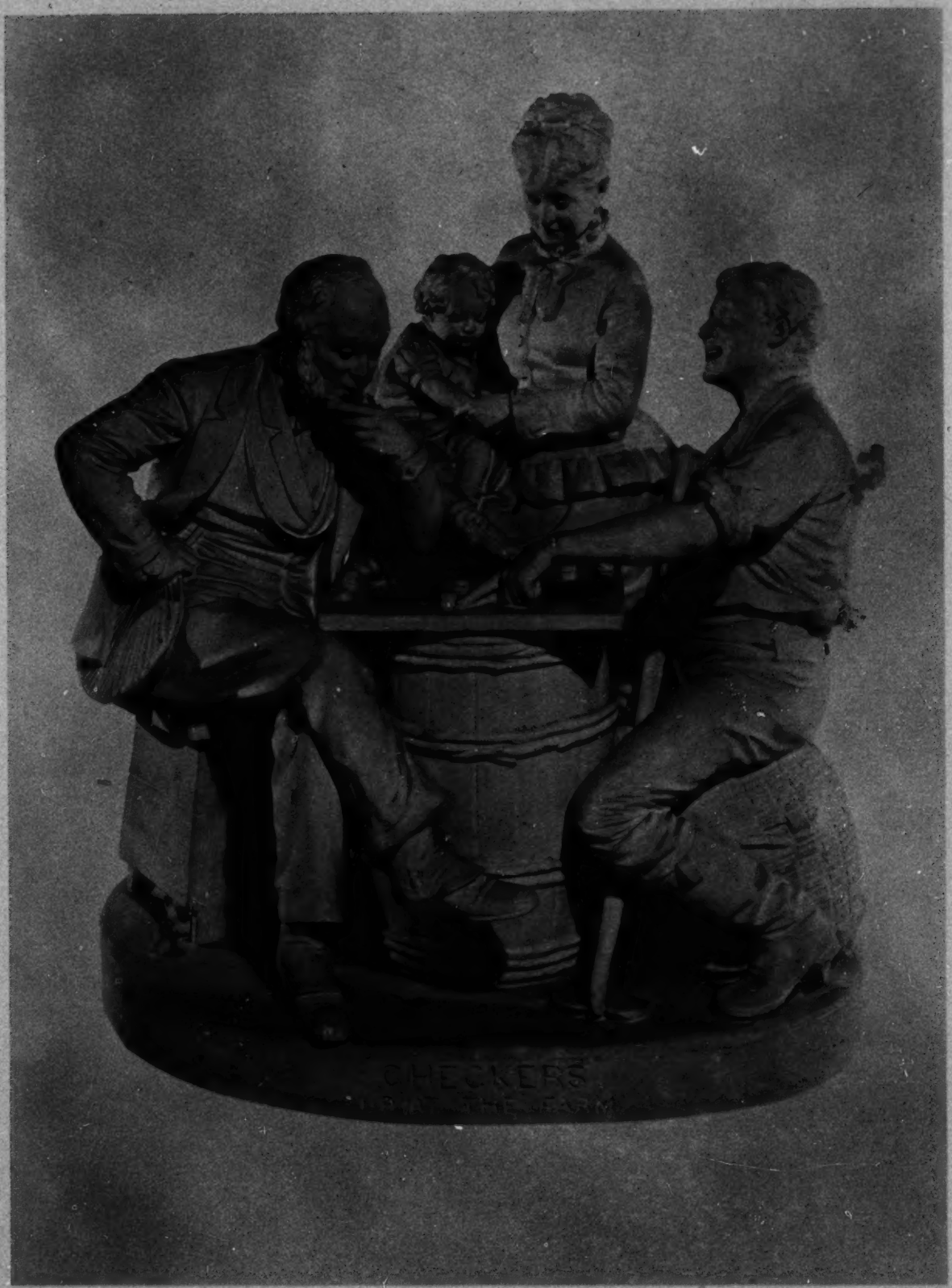
The Bushwacker/The Wife's Appeal for Peace 1865 *(not in exhibition)*

The Campfire/Making Friends with the Cook 1862

Challenging the Union Vote 1869

The Charity Patient 1866

Checker Players 1860



Checkers up at the Farm 1875

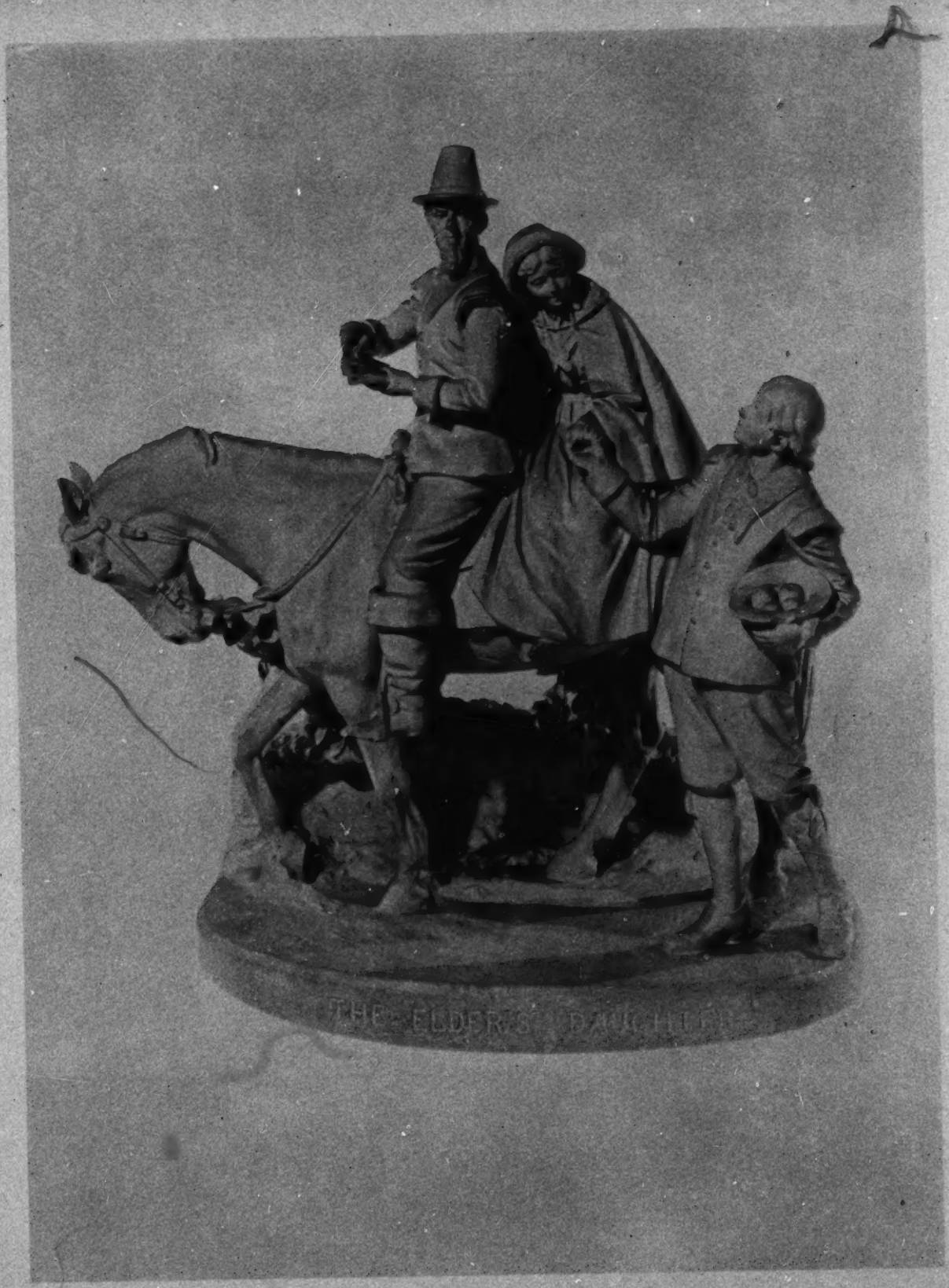
Chess 1889

Coming to the Parson 1870

The Council of War (Type A) 1868 *(not in exhibition)*

Country Post Office/News from the Army 1863

Courtship in Sleepy Hollow 1868



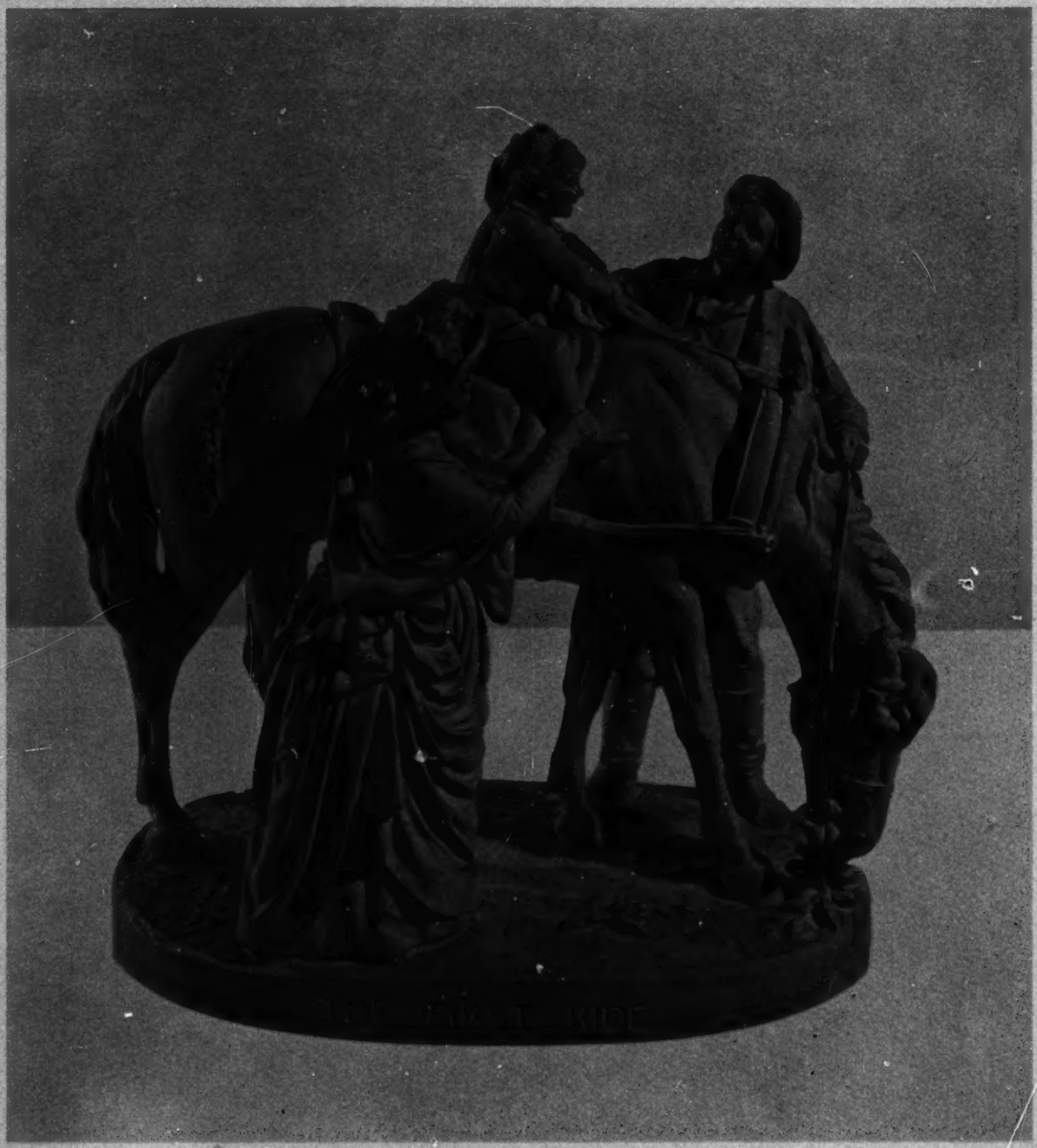
The Elder's Daughter 1886

Faust and Marguerite/Their First Meeting (with short cape) 1890

Faust and Marguerite/Leaving the Garden 1891

The Favored Scholar 1873

Fetching the Doctor 1881



The First Ride (Type B) 1888

Football 1891

The Foundling 1870

A Frolic at the Old Homestead 1887

The Fugitive's Story 1869

Going for the Cows 1873

"Ha! I Like Not That" 1882

Home Guard/Midnight on the Border 1865 ***(not in exhibition)***

"Is it so Nominated in the Bond?" 1880

"Madam, Your Mother Craves a Word with You" 1886

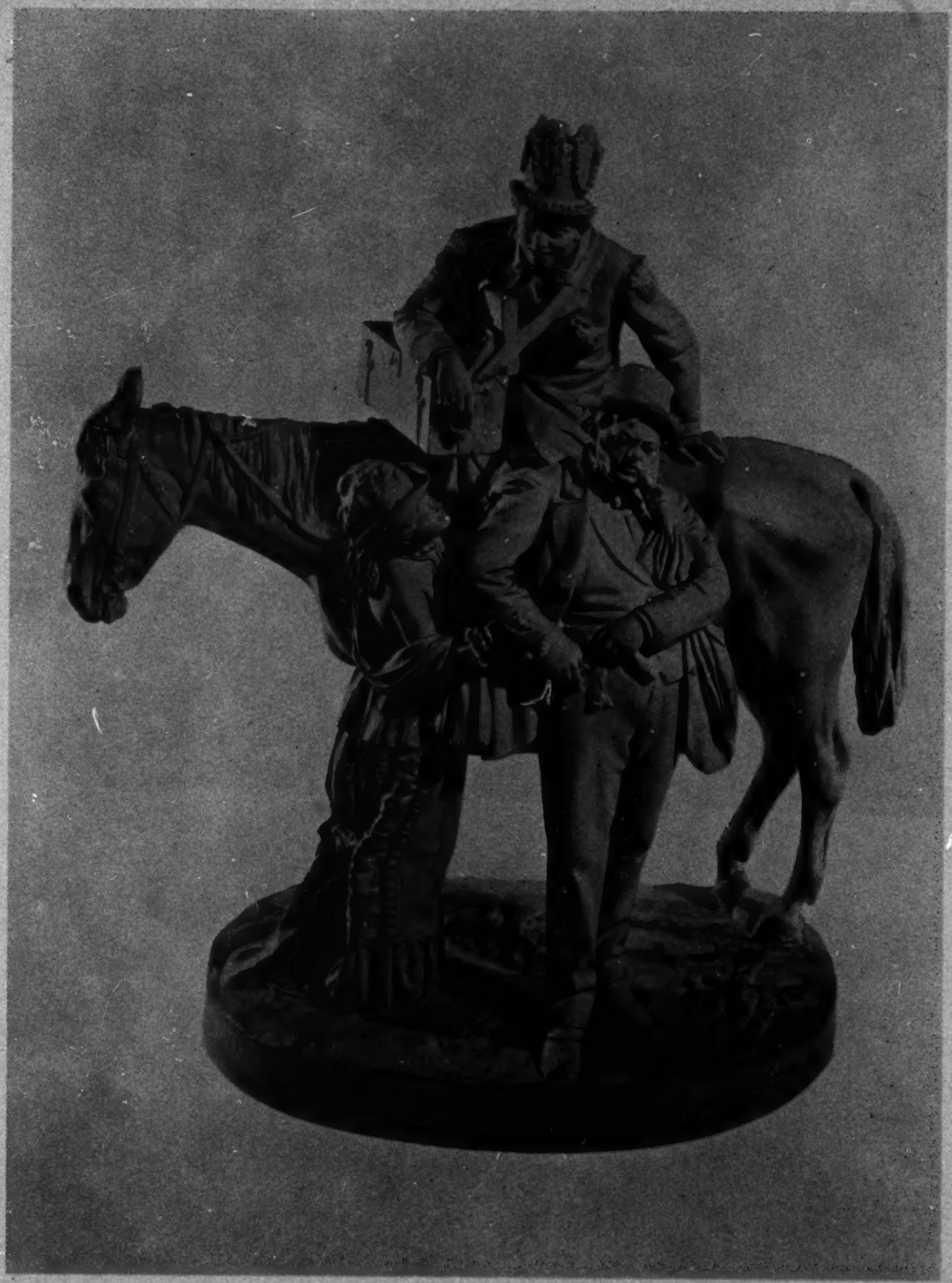
A Matter of Opinion 1884

The Mock Trial/Argument for the Prosecution 1877

Neighboring Pews 1883

The Parting Promise 1870

The Parting Promise (with moustache) 1870



The Peddler at the Fair 1878

Phrenology at the Fancy Ball 1886

The Photograph (Section A) 1878

The Picket Guard 1865?

The Picket Guard (with havelock) 1861

Playing Doctor 1872

Politics 1888

Polo 1879

Private Theatricals/Last Moments Behind the Scenes 1878 *(not in exhibition)*

The Referee 1880

Returned Volunteer/How the Fort was Taken (Type A) 1864 ***(not in exhibition)*** **.**

Rip Van Winkle at Home 1871

Rip Van Winkle on the Mountain 1871

Rip Van Winkle Returned 1871

School Days 1877

The School Examination 1867

Sharp Shooters 1862 *(not in exhibition)*

The Shaughraun and "Tatters" 1875

The Slave Auction 1859 *(not in exhibition)*

Taking the Oath and Drawing Rations 1865

The Tap on the Window 1874

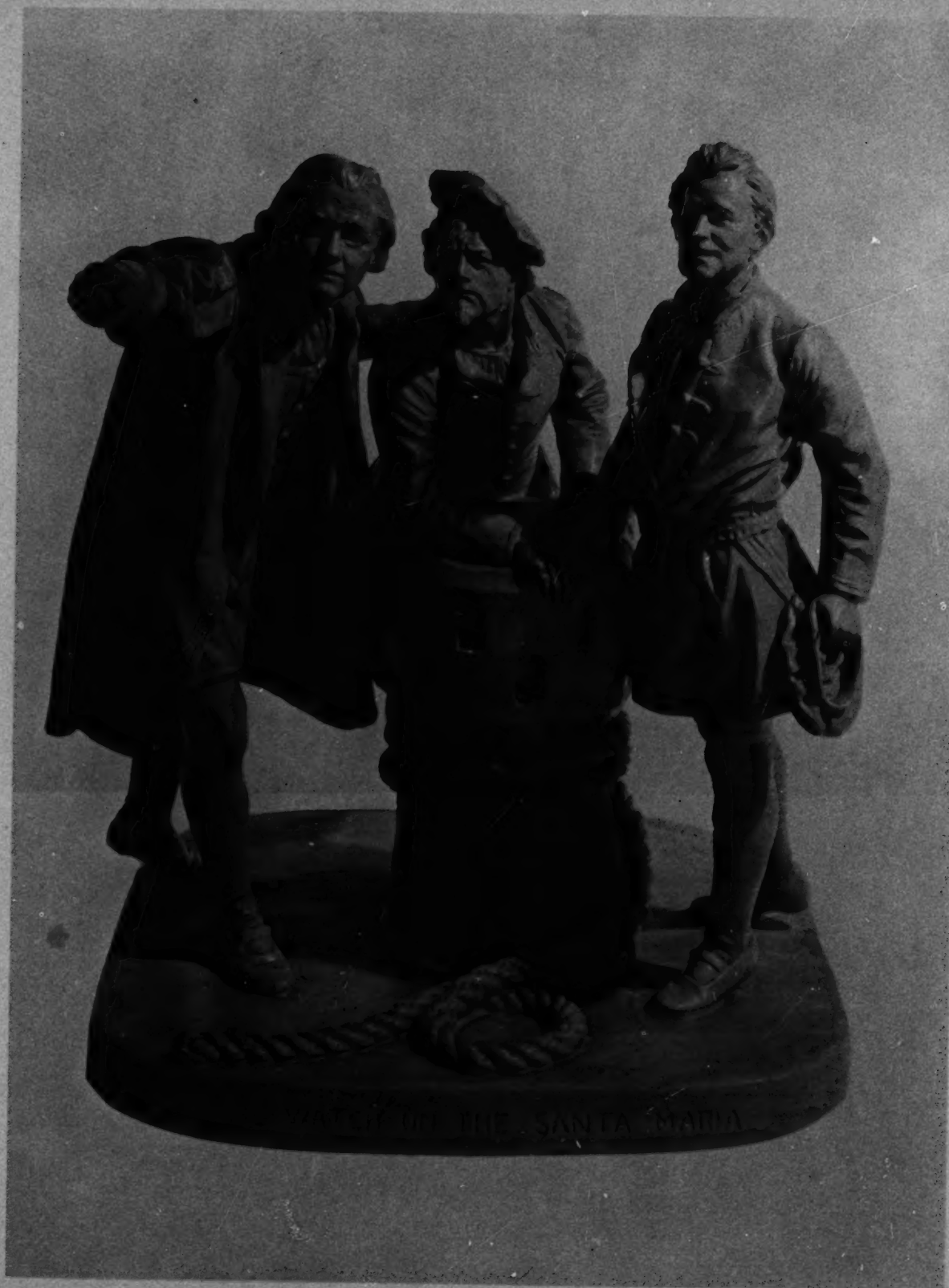
The Town Pump 1862

The Traveling Magician 1877

Uncle Ned's School 1866

Union Refugees 1863

The Village Schoolmaster 1861



The Watch on the Santa Maria 1892

We Boys (Type A) 1872

We Boys (Type B) 1872 *(not in exhibition)*

Weighing the Baby 1876

"Why Don't You Speak for Yourself, John?" 1885

Wounded Scout/A Friend in the Swamp 1864

Wounded to the Rear/One More Shot 1864

The Wrestlers 1881

"You are a Spirit, I Know: When Did You Die?" 1885

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Bicentennial era exhibition, honoring a major American artist who reached the peak of his career during the late 19th century, is made possible by a grant from the Mallery Charitable Trust. For this generous assistance, we are most grateful.

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JOHN ROGERS GROUPS

October 9 - November 14, 1976

TECHNIQUE

Rogers worked directly in clay from live models after sketching his ideas first on paper. To avoid loss of detail or damage to the original clay, Rogers early learned that to secure exact copies in plaster he needed to have a master model cast in bronze. (See "THE WRESTLERS" as an example in the exhibition.) Around this his workmen built a wooden frame. A newly discovered gelatinous glue was poured around the bronze. When the mix was firm the frame was removed. The rather elastic mold was then cut in sections ready for the liquid plaster. When firm, workmen fitted together the plaster sections of each group with wires and smoothed over the seams with wet plaster. Interior wire armatures were added to sections which might easily be broken. (The most fragile parts were cast in pewter such as flags, ears of horses, ruffled collars, and a spinning wheel.) When dry, each group was painted with a mixture of zinc white and burnt umber oil paint mixed with turpentine to a very thin consistency. Rogers decided after various experiments that the soft, mat putty colors which resulted best showed off his groups. (The paint formula given by Rogers should be adhered to in restoration. The wrong color or repeated heavy coats of paint tend to destroy the fine detail and character of the group.)

This exhibition made possible by a grant
from the Mallery Charitable Trust, Flint, Michigan

American Realism which followed. In his year of art study in France and Italy (1858-1859), this young New Englander reacted strongly against the academic styles being taught. Not until his return did he begin to achieve success in his New York studio with his own original style and concepts. He popularized sculpture in this country to a degree unheard of before, with a success that rivalled the colored lithographs of his contemporaries, Currier and Ives.

Sculpture was used by Rogers to express or record an idea or an occasion, not to display form — although the form is there. In this, he reversed the approach of many contemporary sculptors to whom story-telling and genre scenes — and even specific ideas — are anathema. Each era has its own needs, and Rogers met the needs of his day brilliantly. In addition to critical acclaim, he drew praise from Abraham Lincoln, John Greenleaf Whittier, Henry Ward Beecher, and other notables of his day. Over 100,000 plaster groups were sold of which only a few thousand remain. By using lowly plaster — not traditional wood, marble, or bronze — this was possible. He stated that the groups were "not intended for rich people's parlors but more for common houses and the country." Because all media have equal status on the contemporary art scene, the past's reluctance to accord Rogers' plaster groups full acceptance should no longer hold validity. Today, even sculpture made of plastic is seriously collected, and found in museum collections.

The story-telling impact of Rogers Groups is so effective and beguiling because of the drama, sentiment, or humor that it is easy to overlook the exceptional technical skill and originality involved. This is true of all realistic art, yet it is especially true of Rogers' work. Although he aimed his work for the general public, his modelling ability in clay in his finest groups is flawless. His genius lies especially in always achieving the exact facial expressions required for the story. To attain such a skill in clay on such small scale is an extraordinary accomplishment. One has only to compare the almost expressionless faces of 18th century European porcelain figurines to comprehend this remarkable ability of John Rogers and his vigorous innovative Realist style. It was undoubtedly this dramatic aspect of his work, with its depth of understanding of human nature, and not just the pleasing details of the costumes and accessories, which so captivated the Victorian era.

Because Rogers often used his wife, children, and friends as models there is a special vivacity and authenticity in his finished work. He was especially fond of animals and often introduced them into his sculptures. Horses were exceptionally well modelled. It is easy to forget today that in the period just before the automobile's arrival, horses were as commonplace as people, and artists working with horses as models could never fool the public. Special attention should be given to the modelling of horses in all Rogers' sculpture because it is exceptionally fine, and ranks him in this regard with Remington and Russell who followed.

Although a modest man, Rogers showed remarkable acumen in advertising and selling his wares. With his goal of "large sales and small profits" his business expanded rapidly with the successes of his first groups based on themes of the Civil War. These early works appeared in shops in Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore — and in cities as far west as San Francisco. They were entered in New York art exhibitions and displayed dramatically in his own New York showrooms. Later the groups were sent to many fairs and expositions here and abroad, including France, Chile and Australia. In 1873, P.T. Barnum was advertising "Prof. Rogers Group of Classic and Historic Statuary" drawn in procession on "12 Gorgeous Statuary Chariots".

Advertisments appeared in many major magazines and newspapers. Catalogues illustrating available groups were published by Rogers and circulated by his agents. An example from the FIA collection is on view in the exhibition. A popular pastime of that age was parlor stereopticon viewing and Rogers Groups photographs for this simple but clever machine were much sought after. In an age of much greater simplicity than today, with a far greater isolated rural society, it is not possible to overemphasize the impact of Rogers Groups in his day. These charming parlor settings provided visual stories for the homes of the Victorian age, much as mass media (television, photographic magazines, motion pictures) does today.

Subjects for Rogers Groups can be found in the following four categories, all of which are included in the exhibition:

The Civil War Period
The Contemporary Scene (1860-1890)
American History
Literature (American and English)

Rogers Groups still fascinate. The genre scenes provoke a nostalgia for a simpler life which our plastic age has almost obliterated. These will always remain a precious record of a bygone era. All Rogers Groups still extant should be treated as original works of art, carefully cleaned and restored when necessary, and appreciated as a valuable part of our American art and heritage.

G. Stuart Hodge, Director

JOHN ROGERS GROUPS

THE BALCONY **1879**

In June 1879, John Rogers opened his new showroom at 23 Union Square, N.Y.C. The just-completed clay model of THE BALCONY was the center of attention and controversy due to its elaborate realism. The group carries a moral message — the beauty of charity. Two of Rogers' children, Katie and Charlie, posed for the figures of the street musicians. Quiz, a Scotch terrier from Queen Victoria's kennels, was the model for the dog. Quiz belonged to a cousin of Rogers. The fact that Quiz could sit on his hind legs with a piece of meat on his nose for long periods of time, made him an ideal model.

THE BATH **1894?**

One of Rogers' most charming works is also mystifying as to its exact date of execution. It is also one of the rarest in existence — a pity because of its delightful depiction of a bath in the country. It was distributed after Rogers sold his business and retired.

THE BUSHWACKER/
THE WIFE'S APPEAL FOR PEACE **1865**

This is a rare group today, one which had little success when created. Rogers himself was not too proud of it. The Southern couple are loyal to the Union. The wife pleads with her husband to give up his ambushing of Confederate soldiers.

THE CAMPFIRE/MAKING FRIENDS
WITH THE COOK **1862**

This is one of many military scenes which Rogers depicted in his Groups. At the time, its realism was acclaimed with such comments as: "even the bubble on the soup is depicted." This group was the first of many to receive a double title, or subtitle, which provided a further explanation of the scene. Perhaps the soldier would like to increase his rations or just sample the contents of the pot.

CHALLENGING THE UNION VOTE **1869**

John Rogers was an avid Pro-Unionist, and had no qualms about "feeding the fires of patriotism" through his work. This is a voting scene taking place in the Old South, in which a Unionist has come to the polls with his granddaughter and is about to register his vote in the ballot box. The Ex-Confederate registrar is looking through the registry to find his name, and perhaps an opportunity to disqualify him.

THE CHARITY PATIENT **1866**

This group proved to be one of Rogers' most popular. It was especially successful with doctors who found the theme naturally suitable for their offices. This scene is handled with much sensitivity. The sculptor, William Ordway Partridge, wrote of THE CHARITY PATIENT in 1896, that it was "as lovely in modern guise as the simple and beautiful works of Donatello, for it is filled with the sweet feeling of that great master...We must commend Mr. Rogers for his happy treatment here of an unhappy costume."

CHECKER PLAYERS **1860**

Only 8½ inches high, this sculpture was done before Rogers changed to the larger scale which was to characterize his oeuvre. The little group already shows the spirit and expressiveness which is so typical of his best work. The checkers theme reappeared brilliantly in 1875 at the peak of his career in CHECKERS UP AT THE FARM.

CHECKERS UP AT THE FARM **1875**

This group was Rogers' second best seller with a total sale of 5,000 copies, second only to COMING TO THE PARSON which sold 8,000 copies. The bewildered city visitor has just been defeated by the farmer who points to his winning move. The city man's wife looks on. The child is about to kick one of the checkers off the board. And, unbeknown to everyone, one checker has already been lost to the game as it is in the possession of the cat beneath the gentleman's stool.

CHESS **1889**

Youth battles with Age over a game of chess in this group. Rogers, a stickler for details, informs the prospective purchaser in his catalogue that, "the position of the pieces on the board is taken from a problem given in the frontispiece of Staunton's 'Chess Player's Companion'. The Bishop, King, Pawn and Queen in the second row, starting from the left hand, are white, and black is to be checkmated in seven moves."

COMING TO THE PARSON **1870**

This group was the most popular with sales of over 8,000 copies over a period of 20 years. The newspaper in the minister's hand is appropriately entitled "The Union." The title also happens to be that of the newspaper Rogers read as a young mechanic in Manchester, New Hampshire.

THE COUNCIL OF WAR **1868**

In planning this group Rogers applied for advice from Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton. Stanton wrote in a letter dated May 7, 1867, to John H. Clifford, a relative of Rogers', about one of Lincoln's most important war councils: "General Grant after returning from his first visit to the Army of the Potomac, laid before the President the plan of operations he proposed to adopt. This was at the War Department, and the group would embrace the three figures of the President, Secretary of War and General Grant. It would require no accessories but a roll or map in the hands of the General." Rogers followed Stanton's advice except that the map is held by the President. There are three versions of this group. It is the figure of Stanton which varies slightly in the position of his arms. The other two figures remain the same. Rogers won high praise for his skill as a portraitist and as a chronicler of the Civil War.

COUNTRY POST OFFICE/
NEWS FROM THE ARMY **1863**

Rogers explains to the buyer in his catalogue that, "An old cobbler, who is postmaster also, has just opened the mail-bag from the army. He is taking a provokingly long time to study out the address of a letter which the young lady at his side recognizes at once as for her."

COURTSHIP IN SLEEPY HOLLOW **1868**

In this group, Rogers illustrates a scene from Washington Irving's LEGEND OF SLEEPY HOLLOW. Ichabod Crane, a schoolmaster, urges Katrina Van Tassel, a prosperous farmer's daughter, to accept a bouquet. The atmosphere of the Dutch settlement in New York is represented in costume and furnishings. The couple are seated on an old-fashioned Dutch settle.

THE ELDER'S DAUGHTER **1886**

As the Elder and his daughter ride home from Sabbath meeting, a young man offers the daughter an apple. This mild flirtation is considered a desecration of the Sabbath by the father and is the cause of his disapproving glance. Both the customs and the clothing provide a historical account of the early settler in this country.

FAUST AND MARGUERITE/ THEIR FIRST MEETING **1890**

This is the first of three scenes from Goethe's FAUST as popularized in Gounod's opera at the time. The group illustrates the following lines from Part I:
Faust:
Fair lady, may I thus make free
To offer you my arm and company?
Marguerite:
I am no lady, am not fair,
Can without escort home repair.
Rogers did two versions of this group. In one Faust wears a short cape, in the other a long cape.

FAUST AND MARGUERITE/ LEAVING THE GARDEN **1891**

Faust begs Marguerite to accept his love. Testing her lover, she plays the game of "he loves me, he loves me not" and finally promises to see him the next day. He then lets her leave the garden and enter the cottage.

THE FAVORED SCHOLAR **1873**

This group was very popular. The schoolteacher has taken a fancy to the young lady, and catalogues claim that the lilacs on the desk were probably a gift of the "the favored scholar." The young boy is trying to distract the young lady by putting woodshaving curls on his ears.

FETCHING THE DOCTOR **1881**

The motion created by the gallop of the horse captures the urgency of the situation. The young boy was sent by his family to fetch the doctor and now, both return. Rogers' sketchbook shows that nine-year-old Derby Rogers posed for the boy.

THE FIRST RIDE **1885**

Two versions of this group exist. In Type A, the woman is bare-headed, while in Type B she wears a hat. Perhaps the hat was an afterthought to suggest a more "citified" costume. The woman and child are just visiting in the country according to Rogers' catalogue.

FOOTBALL **1891**

The game of football was just beginning to catch on about this time. According to the National Encyclopedia of American Biography, three of Rogers' sons posed for this group along with William Herbert Corbin, captain of Yale's unbeaten 1888 team and All-American center. At that time, the sport was considered spirited but gentlemanly.

THE FOUNDLING **1870**

Though most sympathetically interpreted, this was not one of Rogers' more popular groups. During the Victorian era, the subject of an unwed mother was quite unacceptable. Not surprisingly, the group disappeared from Rogers' catalogues after 1888.

A FROLIC AT THE OLD HOMESTEAD **1887**

This spirited group proved to be Rogers' last extremely popular group. The blindfolded young man attempts to catch the young lady, posed for by Katherine Rogers. The older woman was posed for by Rogers' neighbor's mother. All of Rogers' talents are at their peak performance in this happy scene. It is pure American Realism rather than classical nymphs and satyrs at play.

THE FUGITIVE'S STORY **1869**

This group serves as a civilian counterpart to THE COUNCIL OF WAR. This was not an actual event, but served to honor three prominent men who helped lead the crusade against slavery — the poet John Greenleaf Whittier, the editor William Lloyd Garrison, and the preacher Henry Ward Beecher.

GOING FOR THE COWS **1873**

Rogers intended this group to be a bemused commentary on boyhood. The boy and his dog are so preoccupied with a woodchuck hole that they fail to see that the bars of the fence are down, and the cows have long since gone.

HA! I LIKE NOT THAT! **1882**

Rogers produced a number of groups which illustrated scenes from Shakespeare's plays. The theatre was a truly popular form of entertainment at that time and such groups were quite a success, particularly this one from OTHELLO, Act III, scene 3. Great attention was paid to the details of the costumes which held much attraction for the public.

HOME GUARD/ MIDNIGHT ON THE BORDER **1865**

Rogers expressed dissatisfaction with this sculpture which was soon withdrawn from circulation. A midnight scene shows a woman and girl aroused by some commotion during the war. The woman cocks her revolver ready for any eventuality.

IS IT SO NOMINATED IN THE BOND? **1880**

This scene illustrates the well known trial in Shakespeare's MERCHANT OF VENICE. Antonio agreed to give Shylock a pound of his flesh if he could not repay money that he had borrowed. Antonio is dropping off his coat and opening his shirt, as the flesh is to be cut from "nearest his heart."

MADAM, YOUR MOTHER CRAVES A WORD WITH YOU **1886**

Act I, scene 5 of ROMEO AND JULIET provides the subject matter for this group. There is a costume ball at Juliet's home to which Romeo goes disguised as a clergyman. He takes advantage of his holy dress to kiss Juliet's hand as she is being drawn away by her nurse.

MARGUERITE AND MARTHA: TRYING ON THE JEWELS **1891**

The rarest of Rogers' three groups based on Goethe's masterpiece, the scene is that of Marguerite trying on the jewels that Faust left her to find in her garden. Her guardian Martha watches. It is the moment for the famous Jewel song, the most popular aria from Gounod's opera FAUST.

A MATTER OF OPINION **1884**

Two physicians debate over the health of the invalid. Though seemingly a serious subject, a touch of Rogers' humor is included. The umbrella belonging to one of the doctors is poking the patient in the ribs. She appears not to notice, so absorbed is she in being the center of attention.

THE MOCK TRIAL/ARGUMENT FOR THE PROSECUTION **1877**

Amateur play-acting of this type of performance was a popular parlor game of the period. However, this group was not a success with the public.

NEIGHBORING PEWS **1883**

"I think my group I am at work on here will do very well for Christmas . . .There is some flirtation and some fun in it," wrote Rogers. The local atmosphere of a typical New England village church and the character studies made this group a popular one. There is a copy of it in the Lincoln Room of the White House in Washington, D. C.

THE PARTING PROMISE **1870**

The two versions made of this group depict a young man who is about to leave on a journey. As he says farewell to his lady-love, he places a ring on her finger. The earlier version is that of a younger man, without a mustache. The later version is more common.

PEDDLER AT THE FAIR **1878**

It was not uncommon at that time to see peddlers carrying their wares with them, piled on top of their horses. Here, a young lady would like to purchase some beads. It is unclear whether the reluctant gentleman is her father or her husband.

THE PHOTOGRAPH **1878**

The Photographer and the Sitter are companion pieces designed specifically for either end of a mantlepiece in that they were made smaller than most groups. The Photographer was posed for by Mathew Brady, the famous cameraman of the Civil War Period. This is a reminder to us today of the impact of the still unperfected camera on society in the Victorian era.

PHRENOLOGY AT THE FANCY BALL **1886**

This group represents a tongue-in-cheek comment on the popular "Science" of phrenology, the practice of studying character and mental capacity from the conformation of the skull. Rogers himself was analyzed 17 years before he did this sculpture by the American Phrenological Journal and Life Illustrated as follows: "The head is well built up in the crown, indicating much strength of character in the way of ambition and persistence. A well developed bump of Benevolence and a moderate one of Self Esteem. The rather heavy and depressed brows, show those organs large that deal with the properties of matter."

THE PICKET GUARD **1861 & 1865?**

This group illustrated a familiar scene of the war which had begun only three months before. It proved to be Rogers' first major success and provided a much needed psychological stimulus to continue his work. It is not known when or why Rogers chose to rework the original, but the second version has distinct differences. The officer's cap has no havelock, his mustache is not parted and the tips are not curled, and the private on the left has a goatee.

PLAYING DOCTOR **1872**

For the first time in his work, Rogers used his own children as models. This group was fairly popular, particularly as decoration for doctors' waiting rooms.

POLITICS **1888**

A timely and timeless, humorous commentary on politics as the 1976 presidential election appears during this exhibition schedule. Rogers modelled this group at the time of the 1888 campaign between Cleveland and Harrison. The New Orleans Picayune correspondent in New York reported: "Rogers, the inimitable, makes a happy contribution to the campaign in clay."

POLO **1879**

Polo was first played in New York City in 1876. Rogers soon became interested and presented this excellent work which, due to the novelty of the game, was never popular. The guidon and forward parts of the horse are cast in pewter for added strength. The horse in full gallop with all 4 legs off the ground is a technical accomplishment. Knowledge of such positioning was due to the recent photographic studies of animals in movement by Muybridge which Rogers is known to have studied.

PRIVATE THEATRICALS/ LAST MOMENTS BEHIND THE SCENES **1878**

An amateur theatrical is about to get underway as a couple in the 17th Century French costumes put on final make-up and check lines before the curtain goes up. Rogers reports on one more attractive pastime of the period which continues to delight us today.

THE REFEREE **1880**

Rogers' twin sisters posed in costumes of the 18th Century for this scene. The referee is trying to determine which of the two ladies is taller. After careful observation, it becomes evident that one of the young ladies is playfully on tiptoe.

RETURNED VOLUNTEER/ HOW THE FORT WAS TAKEN **1864**

Two slightly different versions of this scene exist. A returned soldier describes with the blacksmith's tools in the foreground, "how the fort was taken." The group is notable for the precision of details in suggesting a blacksmith's shop and equipment, and for the intensity of expression in the three figures.

RIP VAN WINKLE AT HOME **1871**

This is the first of 3 Rogers groups based on Washington Irving's tale of Rip Van Winkle. It was inspired by the great success in the play by the popular actor, Joseph Jefferson who posed for the sculpture. This first in the series shows the ne'er-do-well Rip with village boys before his fateful trip up the mountain.

RIP VAN WINKLE ON THE MOUNTAIN **1871**

The plot thickens. Rip, again posed for by the actor Joseph Jefferson, meets a gnome on the mountain, helps him lug his keg of beer, and proceeds to his extraordinary adventure.

RIP VAN WINKLE RETURNED **1871**

Rogers was praised for his striking likenesses of the famous actor, Joseph Jefferson who posed for the Rip Van Winkle groups. Here is the rarest of the three. Rip is seen bewildered on his return to town after his 20 year absence — even his own dog failing to recognize him.

SCHOOL DAYS **1877**

Two children (posed for by two of Rogers' seven children) stop on the way to school to see the hurdy-gurdy, so popular on the streets of New York at the time. The monkey has stolen the hat of the perplexed boy. Although acclaimed by the press, the group did not sell well probably because monkeys were not considered appropriate for a Victorian parlor!

THE SCHOOL EXAMINATION **1867**

The little girl is being examined by a visiting member of the School Committee who has gently pointed out a mistake in arithmetic on her slate. The schoolteacher watches with concern for her pupil.

SHARP SHOOTERS **1862**

A rare work today, and a subject too realistic during the Civil War years to find much popularity. Two sharp shooters raise a dummy to draw fire of the enemy and thereby locate his position.

THE SHAUGHRAUN AND "TATTERS" **1873**

Rogers capitalized on the popularity of a long-run play in New York acted by the Irish author and actor, Dion Boucicault, who posed for Rogers with his dog (also in the play). The term "Shaughraun" is gaelic for vagabond.

THE SLAVE AUCTION **1859**

One of Rogers' rarest groups to be found today, this expressive work was created on the threshold of the Civil War when emotions ran high regarding Abolition. Because of the controversial subject, sales of this early work were poor. It is a powerful and moving presentation.

TAKING THE OATH and DRAWING THE RATIONS **1865**

Rogers considered this his finest work — and so do many others because of its dignity, classic lines, and restraint. A southern woman, after the Civil War, is shown taking an oath of allegiance to the Union in order to have food for her son. One newspaper commentary of the time wrote: "(Rogers) was strongly swayed by the passions of the time but the South viewed it as a graceful tribute to the beauty of her women."

THE TAP ON THE WINDOW **1874**

An amusing and popular theme is portrayed here, done in the peak of Rogers' success. As in all his genre groups, the Victorian era is well described and recorded by the many accessories typical of the time.

THE TOWN PUMP **1862**

There are two versions of this early example of Rogers' Civil War Series, done before he changed to a larger scale in his groups — a scale which made greater detail possible and gained in popularity and sales.

THE TRAVELLING MAGICIAN **1877**

An itinerant magician astonishes a bewildered father and a delighted son by pulling a rabbit from the father's hat. Under the stand are details indicating the magician's hidden assistant. It is this type of unique genre scene with its ageless humor and charm which so delighted the public. But, behind the storytelling is the work of a most skilled and original artist.

UNCLE NED'S SCHOOL **1866**

The New Bedford Standard wrote in 1865 that these works have "perfect freedom from class prejudice. Mr. Rogers is not afraid nor ashamed to give the negro his proper place." When the Civil War ended, schools were established for the education of the former slaves. Those who first learned to read, like Uncle Ned, in turn taught others.

UNION REFUGEES (spelter) **1863**

Spelter is a 19th Century term for zinc with a bronzed surface. Because Rogers early received criticism "that plaster was too cheap a material," he cast this early work in zinc as well. He soon ignored the early criticism, stating the groups were "not intended for rich people's parlors but for more common houses and the country." UNION REFUGEES shows a southern family, loyal to the Union, leaving their home for the North. The work is the first done in the larger scale that was to become standard size for the groups. It was also the first to be mass produced in plaster from a master bronze mold rather than from the more fragile plaster or clay models.

THE VILLAGE SCHOOLMASTER **1861**

THE VILLAGE SCHOOLMASTER is one of Rogers' early works which pleased both him and the public but which had few sales. THE PICKET GUARD which followed, launched his career. The schoolmaster arguing with the parson is based on Goldsmith's THE DESERTED VILLAGE, a most popular poem at the time.

THE WATCH ON THE SANTA MARIA **1892**

This final group by Rogers was modelled for the Chicago World's Fair in celebration of the 400th anniversary of the discovery of America. Shortly after, the sculptor sold his business. Interest in Rogers Groups steadily declined thereafter.

WE BOYS **1872**

Rogers wrote as early as 1860, "I want to make studies of animals, and horses particularly." Seven equestrian groups were eventually produced in which Rogers proved himself a master. WE BOYS appears in two versions, the rarer of the two showing the horse agitated by the boys on its back.

WEIGHING THE BABY **1876**

Rogers' wife, baby and small son posed for this delightful group which sold out its first edition very quickly. It is this type of genre with its humor and charm that was so original with Rogers. The mother has brought her baby to be weighed on the grocer's scale. The cheeses, ginger jar, whisk brooms, and account books help to indelibly record the era.

WHY DON'T YOU SPEAK FOR YOURSELF, JOHN? **1885**

Longfellow's narrative poem, THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH published in 1858, inspired this popular work. The spinning wheel is entirely made of pewter to avoid breakage. Rogers learned to use pewter in all delicate areas of his plaster groups.

THE WOUNDED SCOUT/ A FRIEND IN THE SWAMP **1864**

Rogers sent President Lincoln a copy of this acclaimed group and received a letter stating "...(it) is very pretty and suggestive, and, I should think, excellent as a piece of art. Thank you for it." An escaped slave leads a wounded scout to his home in the swamp. An abolitionist in 1865 wrote of the sculpture, "It is a significant lesson of human brotherhood for all the coming ages."

WOUNDED TO THE REAR/ ONE MORE SHOT **1864**

This is the most popular of Rogers' several Civil War groups, and often a gift to veterans who much admired it. General George A. Custer carried this with him from post to post along with one other Rogers sculpture, MAIL DAY. It shows two wounded veterans, one lingering to have one more shot at the enemy before retreating.

THE WRESTLERS **1881**

As one of Rogers' several popular Shakespearean themes, the wrestlers here portray a scene from Act I of AS YOU LIKE IT. As early as 1861, Rogers wrote of his intention of illustrating Shakespeare in his groups, but it was many years before he did so. (This is the only bronze in the exhibition).

YOU ARE A SPIRIT, I KNOW: WHEN DID YOU DIE? **1885**

Rogers modelled several Shakespearean themes because of the great popularity of Shakespeare's plays at the time. The sculptures had great success. From the last act of KING LEAR, Rogers here portrays the reunion of Lear with his daughter Cordelia whom he had wronged and banished from the kingdom.

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